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FIFTH COMMITTEE
Agenda item 114

PROGRAMME PLANNING

Programme 1, Political affairs, of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001

Letter dated 15 November 1996 from the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee

With reference to the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, I would like to inform you that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, at its meeting held on 15 November 1996, authorized me to convey to you amendments to programme 1, Political affairs, and subprogramme 1.7, Question of Palestine (A/51/6 (Prog. 1)).

On behalf of the Committee, I have the pleasure to attach to the present letter the views of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People with respect to the text of the document.

(Signed) Ibra Deguène KA
Chairman
Committee on the Exercise
of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

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ANNEX

Amendments to programme 1, Political affairs, and subprogramme 1.7, Question of Palestine, proposed by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Paragraph 1.1

Add the following sentence at the end of the paragraph:

The programme also includes the promotion of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

Paragraph 1.3

After the words "peacemaking and peace-building" insert the words "the question of Palestine"

Paragraph 1.4 (h):

At the end of the paragraph add the words "as well as assistance to and cooperation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in the implementation of its mandate"

Paragraph 1.34

Amend the second sentence to read as follows:

The Division for Palestinian Rights, which works in consultation with and under the guidance of the Committee, is responsible for providing secretariat services in support of this subprogramme.

Paragraph 1.35

Amend the second sentence to read:

The Middle East peace process gave rise to renewed hopes for a final settlement and opened new possibilities for supportive action by the United Nations.

Paragraph 1.36

Amend the paragraph to read as follows:

A third objective will be to heighten awareness of all aspects of the question of Palestine by providing forums to facilitate consideration of relevant issues and promote dialogue among parties concerned, Governments, United Nations bodies, non-governmental organizations and prominent personalities.

Paragraph 1.37

Amend the paragraph to read as follows:

A fourth objective will be to continue to provide information on the question of Palestine through the preparation of studies and publications and the continued development of the United Nations computer-based information system on the question of Palestine (UNISPAL), in cooperation with relevant departments of the United Nations Secretariat, including the Department of Public Information, United Nations organs, organizations, bodies and specialized agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations.

UNITED
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PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997

THE SITUATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA: PROCEDURES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FIRM AND LASTING PEACE AND PROGRESS IN FASHIONING A REGION OF PEACE, FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT

Programme budget implications of the draft resolution contained in document A/51/L.18

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

A. Requests contained in the draft resolution

1. Under the terms of operative paragraphs 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17 and 21 of draft resolution A/51/L.18, the General Assembly would:

(a) Commend the efforts of the peoples and Governments of the Central American countries to consolidate peace and promote sustainable development by implementing the agreements adopted at the summit meetings, and request the Secretary-General to continue to give the fullest possible support to the initiatives and activities of the Governments of the Central American countries;

(b) Support the adoption of the Framework Treaty on Democratic Security in Central America concerning the supremacy and strengthening of the power of civil society; a reasonable balance of forces; the security of individuals and of their property; the alleviation of poverty; the promotion of sustainable development; the protection of the environment; the eradication of violence, corruption, impunity, terrorism, and trafficking in drugs and arms; and the increased channelling of resources into social investments;

(c) Welcome the agreement reached on 11 November 1996 by the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca to continue the

negotiation process, with a view to finalizing and signing the lasting peace agreement in Guatemala in December 1996, and encourage them to take all necessary measures to achieve that objective;

(d) Also welcome the adoption of the Agreement on social and economic issues and the agrarian situation, the joint statement of the Peace Commission of the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca and the Agreement on the Strengthening of Civilian Power and on the Role of the Armed Forces in a Democratic Society, as well as the statements of the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca of 7 November 1996, which were positive contributions to the peace process in Guatemala;

(e) Recognize a commitment of the Government of Guatemala and civil society to advance in the fight against impunity and towards the consolidation of the rule of law;

(f) Call upon the parties to comply fully with their commitments under the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala and under the Agreement on Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to implement the corresponding recommendations of the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala;

(g) Request the Secretary-General, the organizations of the United Nations system and the international community to continue their support for the peace process and hence for efforts to promote national reconciliation, democracy and development in Guatemala, and reiterate its appreciation of the peace efforts of the Secretary-General, the Group of Friends (Colombia, Mexico, Norway, Spain, the United States of America and Venezuela), as well as its appreciation of the contribution of the Assembly of Civil Society and other Guatemalans within the constitutional framework and the peace agreements;

(h) Call upon the Government of El Salvador and all the political forces involved in the peace process to make all possible efforts to complete the implementation of all remaining aspects of the Peace Agreement;

(i) Welcome the establishment of the United Nations Office of Verification in El Salvador as a mechanism that will combine regular visits by a high-level envoy from New York with a small group of experts in the field, that will guarantee the presence of the United Nations in El Salvador, and that will verify the progress of the implementation of all remaining aspects of the Peace Agreement in El Salvador;

(j) Reiterate its recognition of the effective participation of the Secretary-General and his representatives and encourage them to continue to take all necessary steps to ensure the successful implementation of all the commitments made by the parties to the El Salvador Peace Agreement;

(k) Express its appreciation of the work of the support group for Nicaragua (Canada, Mexico, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden), which, under the coordination of the Secretary-General, was playing an active role in supporting

the country's efforts towards national reconciliation, good governance, economic recovery and social development, particularly with regard to solving the external debt problem and securing investments and new resources that would allow the country's economy and social programmes to continue, and request the Secretary-General to continue to support those efforts;

(l) Reiterate its full appreciation to the Secretary-General for his efforts to promote the pacification process and the consolidation of peace in Central America, and to the groups of friendly countries which have made a direct contribution to attaining those ends, and request that those efforts be maintained.

B. Relationship of the requests to the approved programme of work

2. The above requests relate to subprogramme 1, Good offices, preventive diplomacy and peacemaking, of programme 1, Good offices, preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping, research and the collection and analysis of information, of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, as revised. While resources are provided in the programme budget for activities in support of the Secretary-General's functions in the area of international peace and security, related activities are often not programmed in the programme budget since their very nature often precludes such an approach. This is true of the Secretary-General's activities in promoting a firm and lasting peace in Central America.

C. Activities by which the request would be implemented

3. Should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, the Secretary-General would, with respect to the requests outlined in paragraph 1 above:

(a) Continue to give the fullest possible support to the initiatives and activities of the Governments of the Central American countries, including support for the efforts of Governments of the Central American countries to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies;

(b) Actively support the implementation of the comprehensive peace agreements including their verification and monitoring as foreseen in the Framework Agreement of 10 January 1994 and as agreed by the parties in the agreements, following their signature of the final Peace Accord, expected to take place on 29 December 1996, and to provide good offices to the parties in this process. These activities would include the provision of substantive support and political guidance to the Mission for the Verification of the Agreements on Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA) or to its successor mission;

(c) Continue to provide substantive support and political guidance to the United Nations Office of Verification in El Salvador (ONUV) in carrying out its verification and good offices functions; and after its discontinuation,

undertake activities, within the framework of the Peace Accords, to facilitate the completion of their implementation;

(d) Continue to provide support to the support group for Nicaragua as requested in paragraph 17 of the draft resolution.

D. Additional requirements at full cost

4. At its forty-sixth and forty-seventh sessions, the General Assembly authorized two temporary posts (1 P-5 and 1 General Service) for 1992 and 1993 pursuant to resolutions 46/109 A of 17 December 1991 and 47/118 of 18 December 1992, respectively. Reflecting the expanded support activities required under resolution 48/161 of 20 December 1993 and 49/137 of 19 December 1994, the General Assembly authorized for 1995 the continuation of the two temporary posts and the establishment of one additional Professional post at the P-4 level to assist in the Central American peace process. In view of the continued support activities required under resolution 50/132 of 20 December 1995, the General Assembly authorized the continuation of these posts in 1996 and the related appropriations were approved.

5. As reflected in the reports of the Secretary-General on this item (A/49/489 and Corr.1, A/50/499 and A/51/338), the Secretary-General remains closely involved in the peace process in Central America. There is a continuing need for the good offices of the Secretary-General in Guatemala and El Salvador, for his support for the support group for Nicaragua mentioned above, and for the continued backstopping of MINUGUA and ONUV. In addition, if draft resolution A/51/L.18 were adopted, the General Assembly would request a broad scope of activities by the Secretary-General, which would include the continued need to be ready to support the full implementation of the agreements in El Salvador beyond the departure of ONUV. It is also anticipated that, with the signing of the final Peace Agreement, the United Nations will be called upon to provide overall coordination and carry out functions with regard to the verification of compliance by the parties in Guatemala of their commitments under the various constituent agreements as foreseen in the Framework Agreement of 10 January 1994.

6. It is anticipated that, should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, the activities outlined in paragraph 3 above would require the continuation of three temporary posts (1 P-5, 1 P-4 and 1 General Service) to assist in all aspects of the Secretary-General's involvement in the Central American peace process.

7. The Political Affairs Officer at the P-5 level would be specifically assigned to complete the preparatory work which is stipulated in the terms of the "Agreement on the establishment of the Commission to clarify past human rights violations and acts of violence that have caused the Guatemalan population to suffer" signed by the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (A/48/954-S/1994/751, annex II). In this regard, the officer's main responsibilities would include the provision of substantive and practical guidelines for the establishment of this Commission in Guatemala, bearing in mind the experience of other "Truth Commissions", in which

the United Nations and/or national bodies have been involved. The officer would also, following the signing of the final Peace Agreement, provide backstopping, support and political guidance in relation to the expanded duties of verification of the comprehensive peace agreements in Guatemala, the implementation of which is expected to start during 1997.

8. The Political Affairs Officer at the P-4 level would, in addition to assisting in the backstopping and support efforts with regard to the expanded verification tasks of the United Nations system in Guatemala, also continue to assist the Secretary-General in the peace processes in El Salvador and Nicaragua. The responsibilities would include the backstopping and provision of support and political guidance with regard to continuing verification and good offices functions, so far carried out by ONUV, and, after its discontinuation, the provision of assistance to the Secretary-General as he undertakes activities to facilitate the full implementation of the peace agreements. With respect to Nicaragua, this officer would continue to assist the Secretary-General in the provision of support for that country's "support group".

9. The continuation of the General Service (Other level) post is requested to provide secretarial support to the two officers.

10. The estimated requirements are indicated below:

(a)	Staff	
	Salary and common staff costs of one P-5, one P-4, and one General Service (Other level) 1997	$285 200
(b)	Travel	46 100
	Total	$331 300
	Staff assessment	$60 600

E. Potential for absorption

11. No provision has been made in the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 under section 3, Peacekeeping operations and special missions, to cover the estimated net additional requirements of $331,300 related to the provision of the additional staff required to support the Secretary-General's continuing efforts in this area. Therefore, it is not anticipated that the related requirements could be absorbed from within the provision under section 3 of the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997, taking into account the reduction already proposed in A/C.5/50/57 and Add.1.

F. Indication of additional requirements

12. Accordingly, should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, it is estimated that additional resources of $331,300 would be required for 1997 under section 3 of the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997.

G. Contingency fund

13. The Secretary-General is of the view that the activities called for in the draft resolution are of an extraordinary nature relating to the maintenance of peace and security, and should be dealt with, as was done on previous occasions, outside the procedures related to the contingency fund, as provided for in paragraph 11 of annex I to General Assembly resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986.

H. Summary

14. Should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, an additional appropriation of $331,300 would be required under section 3 of the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997. An additional appropriation of $60,600 would also be required under section 32, Staff assessment, offset by the same amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment.